

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, undated, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. Mass. Gen. Hospital, Saturday (1879?)

My sweet darling May:

It is so hard to be away from you. I feel as if I can scarcely trust you up in Canada. I want to have my arms round you and have you safe beside me with Elsie and all. I am very glad that Dr. Warren has sent me here for the abscess threatened to be a very serious affair. It had burrowed very deeply in the direction of the bowel — so much so that when I reached the Parker House — it occasioned me great inconvenience and pain in the bath-room. Dr. Warren said there was imminent danger of a fistula being formed and removed me right down here where I am as comfortable as possible. I have been starved ever since I have been here! Have not been allowed to eat a single thing. I am fed entirely on liquid. Good Sallie (as kind and gentle a nurse as can well be) is quite troubled at being obliged to feed me on “slops” as she calls chicken-broth and beef-tea and this afternoon she actually gave me some milk — the nearest approach to solid food I am allowed. However I don't seem to want anything.

Things looked so threatening yesterday morning that Dr. Warren determined to cut a deep opening into the abscess and save the bowel by affording an opportunity for the escape of matter.

He offered me ether but I would rather suffer any pain than become unconscious in that way so I declined. I said I would promise to be perfectly still if he would only let me “yell.” The operation was perfectly successful and the only thing now is to keep quiet until the abscess closes from within. At present the doctor stuffs the hole with cotton thread to prevent it from closing — and tonight they are to put in a small pipe so that there may be a larger passage for the escape of matter. To-day I have felt so comfortable that we have

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gone into business. Your Uncle Eustis and Mr. Chauncey Smith have been going over matters with me. We evidently have an excellent case — and no one anticipates difficulty. I wish I could hear from you my darling — you seem so far, far away.

Your father telegraphed to your Uncle Eustis to say that he would go up to Brantford and take you right down to Washington if I did not object. I answered that I wanted you to make a little visit to my father and mother before coming down — but of course do as you like. I never anticipated leaving you alone in Canada — and feel quite nervous about you all the time. I would have you here with me if I did not feel so poor just now as not to warrant the expense. If you want to come however I will send you some money. Indeed if I had not been confined here I could have had my letter of credit cashed before. I have had perfectly lovely letters from your mama and sister.

Upon second thought I send you \$25 half of what Mr. Sanders has advanced me — so that you may not be without money if you want to come with Annie. Love to all.

Your loving husband, Alec.